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by memberships and special gifts or the Trustees must use principal funds which hitherto have been kept intact. This is the problem which now perplexes the Trustees and the problem as to which they ask the advice of members and friends.

They have already put into operation every economy which can be made without diminishing the service of the Museum to the public. They have even considered opening only parts of the Museum on particular days and discontinuing some of the service now given to the public schools and to visitors. But while these and other like measures have been discussed, the prevailing opinion of both Trustees and staff is that the Museum should not diminish its present service to the public either by closing on particular days some of its galleries or discontinuing any of its educational service.

Reluctant as the Trustees are to depart from their long-continued policy of using income only for administration purposes, they are of the opinion that for the present and for the coming year, unless new sources of income develop, the Museum should draw on principal rather than diminish its present service to the public or restrict any of its present activities. What do our members advise?

R. W. DE F.

A PAINTING BY ZURBARAN

IN Zurbaran we see one of the highest and purest exponents of Spanish painting. "There has never been a painter," writes Manuel B. Cossio, "who has better reflected the two most pronounced tendencies of the Spanish character, namely a passion for reality, and an aspiration toward the ideal." The harsh naturalistic talent of this ardent adherent of the Counter-Reformation was in great demand among the religious houses of Spain, and the name of Zurbaran summons before the mind's eye immediately the many pictures in which he makes startlingly actual the austere life of the monastic orders and the personalities of their founders and governors. For the monasteries also Zurbaran painted scenes from the life of the Saviour and episodes from the lives of some of the

saints less intimately connected with Church dogma and monastic history. The Museum has been fortunate in acquiring recently by purchase the *Battle with the Moors*, a highly important example of this aspect of Zurbaran's work.

Clearly the *Battle with the Moors*¹ depicts some scene from Spanish history, one of the numberless conflicts between Christians and Saracens, in which according to tradition divine forces interposed to the confusion of the Infidel. The Virgin sits among golden clouds with the divine Child on her knee looking down upon an opening in the forest where stands a Christian chapel. Moorish horsemen wearing turbans and carrying shields of fantastic form are seen charging out of the forest, while from the nearer rocks gallop Spanish soldiers in half-armor led by their commander who flourishes his baton. These are followed by shadowy pikemen the shafts of whose weapons in striking parallel slant into the picture from the left. Another pikeman, going out of the picture at the right, is almost in silhouette, the upper part of his body larger than life, the lower cut off by the frame. The effect is startling; it is as though he had come too close to the camera. It is not on him, however, that the eye comes to rest but on the handsome figure of the cavalier at the left, standing at ease, mysteriously aloof, the cavalier whose eyes look directly out at the beholder, whose well-formed left calf stretches half across the scene, whose pike resting along his arm cuts sharply across the pikes of the charging soldiers beyond, and whose powerful swarthy hand pointing at the battle appears as large as a war-horse, rider and all, in the clearing beyond.

This obviously is no mere fighting, sweating cavalryman. It is some saint returned miraculously to earth to help a Christian army against the Moslem foe. No record has been found telling what saint it is that Zurbaran intended and the answer depends on which battle in the long history of the Reconquest is in progress before him. The history of the picture and the legends dealing with the apparitions of two saints in

¹Oil on canvas, round arched top. Height, 13½ in.; Width, 75 in.



BATTLE WITH THE MOORS
BY ZURBARAN

particular supply evidence which may prove entertaining, albeit inconclusive.

The Museum picture and a number more of Zurbaran's important works were painted for the Carthusian monastery at Xeres de la Frontera-Jerez, according to the modern spelling. The Spanish houses of the order were suppressed in 1835, and the decaying cloister may still be seen on the rich sherry-growing banks of the Guadalete, not far from Cadiz. Two years after the order of suppression, many of the treasures of which Cadiz had been justly proud were dispersed, owing to "scandalous events and fatal circumstances." Among them were six paintings of particularly fine quality according to the judgment of Cascales.¹ Five of these later found their way into European museums. The sixth which represented a Moorish battle disappeared after the sale and its whereabouts remained a mystery until recently.

When it came into the possession of the Museum the picture bore the title, *The Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa*. It is not known how long this title had been traditional, but it is a tempting one, for at Las Navas was gained the greatest Christian victory over the Moors recorded in the annals of the Reconquest.² "From that day commenced the decay of the Moslem power in Spain," writes the mediaeval Arab annalist, Ismail Ben Jusuf, "since their affairs were never afterwards found to prosper therein, and the Christian foe becoming masters of one district after another, gradually occupied and kept possession of almost all of the land."³

After an important victory at Alarcos in 1195 the Almohades had overrun half the peninsula. Pope Innocent III, grasping the seriousness of the situation, proclaimed a crusade and threatened to excommunicate any Iberian potentate who should refuse to take part in the campaign on which the salvation of Spain depended.

¹J. Cascales y Muñoz, *Francisco de Zurbaran*, American edition, pp. 54, 55.

²R. B. Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire*, vol. I, p. 79.

³J. A. Conde, *Dominion of the Arabs in Spain*, vol. III, p. 72.

The armies, united under Alfonso VIII of Castile, set out from Toledo in the spring of 1212. They were outnumbered by the Moors, who confidently awaited their advance among the mountains. But "God provided a remedy in this extremity," writes Mariana; "a shepherd, who had long used those mountains and knew them thoroughly (some say it was an angel, for that after he had shown the way, he was never seen more), promised the king, if they would rely on him he would lead the whole army through by-ways he well knew." Another historian¹ is skeptical of the angel and attributes the victory to "the good counsel of a certain peasant whom God sent inspired." Popular tradition among the people, however, affirms that the shepherd saviour was none other than the beloved Saint Isidore, laborer and patron of Madrid. In our painting, is it not the plains of Tolosa where Christian and Saracen fight their battle? And the splendid figure standing aloof from the struggle? Is he not Saint Isidore, his ploughman's humble garb transposed to suit the aristocratic Spanish taste, pointing out the path which the troops take in falling upon the enemy? In the background the Christian church may well typify the significance of the victory about to be gained. Zurbaran must have painted the popular peasant saint *con amore*, for his own youth was spent laboring in fields and pastures.

Well and good. But a tradition of surer origin does not admit of the Saint Isidore theory. Ponz, who visited the Carthusian church at Jerez in the eighteenth century, writes² of seeing there two excellent paintings by Zurbaran, one of which represented the Virgin and Child and some kneeling monks, while the other showed "Our Lady aiding the inhabitants of Xeres in a battle which they won from the Moors in that vicinity, in which was captured their leader Aben-faha, who was then sent captive to Alfonso XI." If we assume that the monks at Jerez informed Ponz

¹A. Schottus, *De Rebus Hispaniae*, XI, p. 255.

²A. Ponz, *Viage fuera de España*, vol. XVII, p. 278.

correctly, we must search Spanish history for another and later battle.

From early in the eighth century the Moors had possession of Xeres and the country round about. It was ultimately recaptured in 1264 by Alfonso X, the Learned, and after that played a prominent part in the struggles between the Christians and the Moors. In the reign of Alfonso XI, the Implacable, the king of Granada and the Moroccan emir joined in the last great effort of the Moors to reconquer Spain. Castile and Aragon forgot their quarrels and made common cause. In 1340 the Africans made a raid on the territory about Xeres, robbing and pillaging and "leaving a desert as might the devastating tempest of thunders and lightnings." But while they were embarrassed by the quantity of their booty the Christians took them by surprise and turned the tide once more. Thrown into a panic the Moors withdrew leaving two illustrious generals stretched on the field. The disaster filled the hearts of all Islam with bitterest grief. Their armies awaited the final issue with sad foreboding. On October 30 in the valley of the Guadalete, on whose fertile banks was built more than a century later the Carthusian monastery, the Spaniards won the battle of Rio Salado, by all odds the most important Christian victory since the days of Las Navas de Tolosa.¹ The importance of the preliminary battle at Xeres was appreciated by the Spanish among whom the tradition sprang up that no less a being than the apostle Santiago of Compostella, patron saint of Spain, had been present at the battle interceding for the Christians in this great overthrow of the Mohammedan power.²

As Slayer of the Moor, Santiago has often been shown by the Spaniards dressed in armor and leading the battle on a white steed. The *Acta Sanctorum* devotes 29 folio pages to the "consideration of amazing victories which it is said the Virgin Mary

with Saint James, being invoked, performed against the Moors in Lusitania" alone. In the Museum picture Zurbaran has shown him, if indeed it be he, directing the battle, a soldier of aristocratic bearing, armed with sword and spear, while at his shoulder can be seen the head of his white horse, much subdued in value. The church in the background may well prefigure the Carthusian monastery which was destined to stand near the site where the battle occurred, and which was to house during two centuries the painting of the battle now owned by the Museum.

It is difficult to place Zurbaran's paintings in order of their dates, for his style showed little development until his last years. It would appear, however, that the two centuries referred to above are very nearly exact. The infamous sale of the convent treasures, it will be remembered, occurred in 1837 and the evidence indicates that the Battle with the Moors was painted within a year or two of 1637. The four pictures by Zurbaran illustrating the life of Christ, which were included in the sale and which now hang in the Grenoble gallery, show points of strong similarity to the Museum picture, and two of these, The Nativity and the Circumcision, are signed and dated 1638 and 1639 respectively. The Virgin of the Rosary Appearing to Some Monks, now in the museum at Posen, which Ponz connects with the Moorish Battle, is evidently a pendant to the Museum picture, having the same shape and approximate size. It was painted about 1635, according to Prof. Kehrer,³ the artist having come to Jerez in 1630. In the Battle with the Moors as in the Virgin of the Rosary, may be observed Zurbaran's characteristic qualities as a painter, the severe realism, the stark, searchlight effects with use of projections and silhouettes, the peculiar asceticism as regards the use of color. Yet his somber greenish tonality offers its own delights, and his deep transparent shadows do not fail to make good their promise that he who seeks in their dark depths shall surely be rewarded.

H. B. W.

¹R. B. Merriman, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 127.

²P. C. Cahier, *Characteristiques des Saints*, vol. I, p. 69.

³Hugo Kehrer, *Francisco de Zurbaran*, p. 70.